



NJSIAA/NFHS 2020-21 Boys and Girls Soccer Considerations

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee & NJSIAA staff offers this document as reasonable modifications to the soccer rules for the 2020-21 season. The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city, and state to help prevent the spread of virus. Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. Lastly, the situation with Covid-19 is rapidly changing. These considerations may quickly become outdated. Please keep up with the latest from the CDC and other health officials in New Jersey.

Return to Competition

General Considerations:

- Social distancing of at least 6 feet should always be maintained. No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps for support/encouragement.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment including balls.
- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Stay at home if you are sick.
- Local school protocols must be communicated effectively with all parties.
- **Pre and Post Game Ceremony:** Establish soccer specific social distancing game protocols including the elimination of handshakes before and after the match.
- **Limit attendees to the head referee, the head coach and one captain from each team.**
- **Move the location of the pregame conference to center of the field and maintain a social distance of 6 feet.**

- ***Team Benches – In a stadium – should be located on opposite sides of the field if possible. Players should social distance 6 feet apart.***
- ***Suspend the pregame world cup introduction line and have players stand on their field positions with bench personnel lined up on the touch line (6 feet apart) for introductions.***

Considerations for Coaches:

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “pods” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.
- Coach your team and limit interaction with officials to key questions at the appropriate time. This season is all about participation and an opportunity for the students to engage in educational athletics.
- Coaches should wear facemasks while coaching on the sidelines.

Considerations for Students:

- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies.
- If protective equipment is used, it must be labeled and not shared (goggles, masks if permitted).
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful at all contests and practices.
- Athletes should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Cloth face coverings are permitted.
- Long sleeve shirts and long pants are permitted to be worn.
- Undergarments are permitted to be worn but must be of similar length for the individual and a solid like color for the team.
- Bring your own water bottle.
- Students are expected to handle the game ball, not the officials. Recommendation is to avoid hand contact if possible.
- Students should wear facemasks while on the bench and/or sidelines.
- If you are not feeling well, please stay home. Be a role model and a selfless teammate.

Considerations for Umpires:

- Bring personal hand sanitizer, tissues, towels etc. Wash hands frequently.
- Don't share equipment.
- Bring your own water bottle (filled).
- Players should always handle the game ball.
- Follow social distancing guidelines. Consider six feet minimum distance when carding or talking to others (players, coaches, other officials) including interaction with the scorer's table.
- The NJSIAA Sportsmanship Statement must be read to all players, maintaining social distancing.
- Meeting with coaches and captains should be conducted maintaining social distancing.

- Consider using electronic whistle.
- Do not shake hands and follow pre- and post-game ceremony guidelines established by state associations.
- Use of radios to communicate with partner is permissible and encouraged.
- Officials personnel may always wear cloth face coverings.
- Officials are permitted to wear long sleeve shirts or jackets.
- Officials are permitted to wear gloves.
- School protocols will dictate temperature checks, questionnaires and the like.
- Officials should not expect a changing area. Bathrooms will be at the discretion of the site, again following all protocols in place by that school.
- Officials not feeling well should turn back their assignment and contact the school and assignor immediately.

Considerations for Parents

(A family's role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others):

- Make sure your child and immediate household members are free from illness before participating in practice and competition (if there is doubt stay home),
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Disinfect your student's personal equipment after each game or practice.
- Reminder to all this season is about participation so let the players play, let the coaches' coach and let the officials officiate while you enjoy watching your child's team participate in educational athletics.